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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/579,273	05/26/2000	Shoji Arikuma	000672	7798
23850	7590	05/19/2004	EXAMINER	
ARMSTRONG, KRATZ, QUINTOS, HANSON & BROOKS, LLP 1725 K STREET, NW SUITE 1000 WASHINGTON, DC 20006			LAO, LUN S	
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
		2643		10
DATE MAILED: 05/19/2004				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/579,273	ARIKUMA ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Lun-See Lao	2643

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 February 2004.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) _____ is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____. |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Introduction

1. This action is response to the appeal brief filed on 02-25-2004.
2. In view of the appeal brief filed on 05-25-2004, PROSECUTION IS HEREBY REOPENED. A new ground of rejection is set forth below.

To avoid abandonment of the application, appellant must exercise one of the following two options:

- (1) file a reply under 37 CFR 1.111 (if this Office action is non-final) or a reply under 37 CFR 1.113 (if this Office action is final); or,
- (2) request reinstatement of the appeal.

If reinstatement of the appeal is requested, such request must be accompanied by a supplemental appeal brief, but no new amendments, affidavits (37 CFR 1.130, 1.131 or 1.132) or other evidence are permitted. See 37 CFR 1.193(b)(2).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsumoto (US PAT 5,621,659) in view of Schotz (US PAT. 5,491,839)

Consider claim 1 Matsumoto teach an audio component system comprising a plurality of components (see fig.1b, (11,21)) for outputting audio signals, and a signal processing control unit (see fig.1a, 1) connected to the components (see fig.1b, (11,21)), the signal processing control unit (1) comprising a plurality of signal input terminals (Pa, Pb and Pc) for receiving audio signals from the components,

selector means (4) connected to the signal input terminals for selecting the audio signal received by a desired one of the signal input terminals (see col.2 line 50-col.4 line 20),

a signal processing circuit for processing the selected signal and outputting the resulting audio signal (see col.23 line 5-col.24 line 15), and

a control circuit of the signal processing control unit (fig.1a, 1) connected to a respective control circuit (fig.1b, (12,22)) of each of the components (11,21), the control circuit of the signal processing control unit comprising signal transmitting means (see col.2 line 50-col.4 line 20) for inherently automatically transmitting at a suitable time a call signal to the control circuit of at least one of the components which is to be checked for connection or non-connection(see col.17 line 35 –col.18 line 60), the control circuit of each component comprising signal response means for sending the answer signal to the signal processing control unit in response to the call signal from the control circuit of the signal processing control unit (see col.7 line 7-col.8line 38), but Matsumoto does

not teach muting means, comprised in the signal processing means, for automatically reducing substantially to zero the sound volume of the audio signal selected by the control circuit which is to be output from the signal processing circuit when the audio signal selected by the selector means is from the component not responding to the answer signal.

However, Schotz teaches muting means (see figs. 11a,11b (150,158), comprised in the signal processing means (microcontroller circuitry 118), for automatically reducing substantially to zero the sound volume of the audio signal selected by the control circuit which is to be output from the signal processing circuit when the audio signal selected by the selector means (select switch 10) is from the component not responding to the answer signal (such as loss of the pilot signal or no signal lock on any channel. and see col.30 line 25 –col.32 line 61).

Therefore, it would have obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of Matsumoto into the teaching of Schotz to provide a method for silencing the receiver when the receiver itself experiences a fault.

Consider claims 2-5 Mastumoto teaches an audio component system of the signal transmitting means (see fig.1b, 1) of the control circuit of the signal processing control unit (1) transmits the call signal to the control circuits of all the components (see fig.1b, (11,21)) when the signal processing control unit is energized (see col.2 line 50-col.4 line20); and one of the signal input terminals (Pa, Pb and Pc) is selected by the selector means (4), the signal transmitting means (see fig.1a, (1)) of the control circuit of the

signal processing control unit transmits the call signal to the control circuit of the component connected to the selected signal input terminal (see col.5 line 65- col.6 line 65); and the signal transmitting means (see fig.1a, (1)) of the control circuit of the signal processing control unit transmits the call signal to the control circuits of all the components in a predetermined cycle (see col.15 line 25-col.16 line 65), and the audio component system of the signal processing circuit amplifies the signal (see fig.18, (O/E, 52) and col.21 lines 10-33).

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claim 1-5 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered to applicant's disclosure. Friske et al. (US PAT. 5,208,865) is recited to show other related to audio component system.

7. Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

or faxed to:(703) 872-9306

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive, Arlington.

Art Unit: 2643

VA., Sixth Floor (Receptionist).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lao,Lun-See whose telephone number is (703) 305-2259. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:00 to 6:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Curtis Kuntz, can be reached on (703) 305-4708.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Technology Center 2600 whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.

Lao,Lun-See
Patent Examiner
US Patent and Trademark Office
Crystal Park 2
(703)305-2259


DUC NGUYEN
PRIMARY EXAMINER